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SUBJECT: PARLIAMENT VOTES TO INVESTIGATE ALLEGED CIA PRISON
IN LITHUANIA

REF: VILNIUS 487

¶1. SUMMARY: Members of all parties in the Lithuanian Seimas (parliament) on November 5 voted to authorize their National Security and Defense Committee to investigate whether the CIA operated a secret prison in Lithuania and, if so, whether GOL institutions or officials were involved. The resolution approving the investigation received 67 votes in favor, two against and nine abstentions. An earlier inconclusive investigation by the same committee had been criticized as pro forma, and committee members said they needed this parliamentary mandate to compel witnesses to cooperate. End summary.

¶2. The Lithuanian Seimas on November 5 voted lopsidedly in favor of authorizing its National Security and Defense Committee to investigate allegations that the CIA operated a secret prison for suspected terrorists. Of the 78 members voting, 67 voted in favor of the investigation. Here is an unofficial Embassy Vilnius translation of the resolution:

Article 1

To authorize the Seimas National Security and Defense Committee (hereinafter -- the Committee) to undertake a parliamentary investigation on the possible transportation and imprisonment in the territory of the Republic of Lithuania of persons detained by the Central Intelligence Agency of the United States of America.

Article 2

To authorize the Committee to answer the following questions:

- ¶1. whether persons detained by the CIA were transported to and jailed in the territory of the Republic of Lithuania;
- ¶2. whether Lithuanian state institutions (politicians, officials, civil servants) took any part in considering issues concerning the operations of secret CIA centers in Lithuania or transportation and jailing of the detained persons in the territory of the Republic of Lithuania;
- ¶3. whether secret CIA detention centers operated in the territory of the Republic of Lithuania.

Article 3

To authorize the Committee to present to the Seimas conclusions of the investigation by December 22, 2009.

¶3. Committee chairman Arvydas Anusauskas announced that the panel planned to interview all relevant officials who worked in government, national security and defense or other posts during the period in question, 2004 to 2005. Committee member Gediminas Kirkilas -- who became defense minister in December 2004 and prime minister in summer 2005 and is on the list of witnesses to be questioned -- said he thought the investigation could harm Lithuanian security as well as relations with the United States. Kirkilas did not vote on the resolution.

¶4. Loreta Grauziniene, deputy chairwoman of the Labor Party,

voted against the resolution, saying the most important thing is that any prison no longer exists in Lithuania, whether it did in the past or not. She said an investigation could expose Lithuania and its troops serving in Afghanistan to increased danger from terrorists. Both votes against the resolution came from Labor Party members, though two other members voted for it and four abstained.

¶15. The director of the State Security Department, Povilas Malakauskas, told journalists he would not comment publicly on the matter, but said, "Nevertheless, members of the committee or investigators will be provided with all the information they need for the probe."

¶16. The committee had earlier conducted an investigation into the existence of the alleged prison, without reaching a conclusive result. Critics said that probe was pro forma and not intended to find the truth, but committee members said they did not receive cooperation from witnesses, and needed the mandate this resolution provides in order to conduct a thorough investigation.

¶17. The Seimas currently has 139 members, and many were not present for the vote. Support came from nearly every political faction in the Seimas, and the abstentions also were distributed among parties across the political spectrum.
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